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RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4377
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2735
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 1382
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5480
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7441
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0308
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0422
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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002084

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Mideast
2. 9/11 Anniversary

Key stories in the media:

All media led with the killing of two IAF airmen yesterday evening when their Cobra attack helicopter crashed in the Galilee, apparently due to a technical failure.

Ha'aretz reported that the U.S. has delayed Israel's request for "bunker-busting" bombs and an air corridor to Iran. The newspaper noted that this will make it more difficult for Israel to attack Iran. Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that yesterday Israel categorically rejected Iran's demand that it be condemned over threats made by Pensioners Affairs Minister Rafi Eitan and DM Ehud Barak. In a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Israel's Ambassador to the UN wrote that Iran is the last country that can give Israel moral lessons.

Israel Radio quoted U.S. Consul-General in Jerusalem Jacob Waller as saying in an interview with the Palestinian newspaper Al-Ayyam that Israel and the Palestinians have agreed to talk about East Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

The Jerusalem Post quoted senior diplomatic officials as saying yesterday that Israel wants a fifth round of indirect talks with Syria in Turkey, amid reports that the Syrians would prefer to postpone further negotiations until the spring.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday Israel and U.S. officials were unable to say when Gen. James Jones will present to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice his report on Israel's security needs after the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Ha'aretz quoted Shas leader and Industry, Trade, and Labor Minister Eli Yishai as saying that if FM Tzipi Livni and Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz do not manage to form a government, there will be elections in March. Yediot reported on extensive phony voter registration leading up to the Kadima primary.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted DM Barak as saying yesterday that an IDF operation in the Gaza Strip would have killed the negotiations over Gilad Shalit. The newspaper also reported that Iran is pressuring Hamas to carry out a coup in the West Bank, seize power in the PA, and prevent an agreement between the PA and Israel.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Palestinian sources as saying a Palestinian in his 20s was killed during an IDF operation in the Nablus neighborhood of Ras el Ein yesterday evening.

Major media cited a report issued by the human rights organization B'Tselem that over the past few years Israel has added large tracts of land to settlements east of the security fence -- principally through acts of violence toward Palestinians. The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday B'Tselem and Hamoked: Center for the Defense of the Individual charged that in the past year, Israel has stepped up its policy of separating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank and forcing Palestinians registered in Gaza or wishing to visit Gaza to forego their right to live in the West Bank.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the IDF has launched a car ID system to speed up roadblocks for settlers.

Yom Leyom quoted former PA prisoners affairs minister Fares Kadoura as saying that he agrees that Jerusalem should not be divided, and that PA President Mahmoud Abbas is detached from the terrain and cannot bring peace. Kadoura took part in the recent Istanbul meeting between representatives of Shas and the PLO.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe quoted Gen. Antoine Lahad, the former commander of the South Lebanon Army, as saying that peace with Israel would end President Assad's regime.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday, during a conference on terrorism in Herzliya, Iraqi MP Mithal Al-Aloussi called to establish a joint intelligence network with Israel and the U.S.

Ha'aretz quoted Shas leader and Industry, Trade, and Labor Minister Eli Yishai as saying that if FM Tzipi Livni and Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz do not manage to form a government, there will be elections in March.

Leading media reported that former justice Eliezer Rivlin, the Chairman of the Central Elections Committee, decided that it was not in his power to approve the candidacy of former Shas leader Aryeh Deri to the position of mayor of Jerusalem. Yediot reported that

Deri can circumvent the "moral turpitude" clause by turning to his friend President Shimon Peres or the High Court of Justice.

The Jerusalem Post reported on the opening performance of the Alvin Ailey dance troupe in Tel Aviv yesterday.

Ha'aretz reported that musician Daniel Barenboim was attacked by extreme-right wingers in Jerusalem and had to use the services of a bodyguard.

Maariv featured a story about Sam Rasool, who could be the first Palestinian-American to be elected to Congress.

Maariv presented the results of a TNS/Teleseker poll:
If Knesset elections were to be held today and Livni to head Kadima with the following parties running, for which party would you vote? Results in Knesset seats. (In brackets: Maariv's August 26 poll):
Likud: 29 (31); Kadima:25 (23); Labor Party: 14 (12); Yisrael Beiteinu: 12 (12); Arab parties: 10 (10); Shas:9 (9); National Union Party and National-Religious Party:8 (8); Meretz:4 (5); United Torah Judaism: 5 (6); Social Justice -- new party headed by Arkady Gaidamak: 2 (4); Pensioners Party:0 ; Green Party 2 (0).

If Knesset elections were to be held today and Shaul Mofaz to head Kadima with the following parties running, for which party would you vote? Results in Knesset seats. (In brackets: Maariv's August 1 poll):
Likud: 29 (31); Labor Party: 18 (16); Kadima:17 (16); Yisrael Beiteinu: 13 (11); Arab parties: 11 (10); Shas:8 (8); National Union Party and National-Religious Party:8 (8); Meretz: 5 (6); United Torah Judaism: 5 (6); Social Justice -- new party headed by Arkady Gaidamak: 3 (5); Green Party 3 (3); Pensioners Party:0).

I. Mideast:

Summary:

Washington correspondent Natasha Mozgovaya wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The extent to which the next [U.S.] president will want to make his presence felt in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will depend on his willingness to put all his weight on that frail card [the peace process]."

Meretz-Yahad Party Knesset Member Yossi Beilin wrote in Ha'aretz: "[Olmert's] successor will be making a big mistake if he or she treats autumn 2008 as a transition season. Without an agreement of principles, winter 2009 could be one of the worst of our lives."

Block Quotes:

I. "Seeking s Super-Policy"

Washington correspondent Natasha Mozgovaya wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (9/11): "Israel's limited role in the Obama and McCain campaigns is no accident. This time as well, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not going to be at the top of America's foreign policy agenda -- not any time soon, and not just because America is busy with other problems. The population that will ultimately decide in favor of one of the versions of 'change' will rapidly be making demands in return. Clinton ended his term by going all out in a last-ditch effort to reconcile Israel and the Palestinians, which made Bush uninterested in taking an active role in the Mideast peace process, for seven years. This time, Bush, and primarily Rice, will try to leave the next president a peace process that is still alive, even if anemic. The extent to which the next president will want to make his presence felt in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will depend on his willingness to put all his weight on that frail card."

II. "The Season for Decision Making"

Meretz-Yahad Party Knesset Member Yossi Beilin wrote in Ha'aretz (9/11): "The first years of the Bush administration were one big missed opportunity with regard to the Middle East.... [Eventually],

last November, he launched the Annapolis process that was supposed to lead to a final-status agreement within a year. But the parties to the process failed to take up the gauntlet.... Olmert, who has undergone a great ideological change since his Knesset vote against the Camp David Accords 30 years ago, believed that the journey he made would enable him to persuade the Palestinian leadership to reach an agreement of principles. But the rather small distance between him and Abbas was not bridged. As a prime minister who has resigned, he cannot reach an agreement, but his successor will be making a big mistake if he or she treats autumn 2008 as a transition season. Without an agreement of principles, winter 2009 could be one of the worst of our lives."

12. 9/11 Anniversary:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The war against Western civilization is real, but the enemy is not a conveniently homogeneous body."

Columnist and historian Tom Segev wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Seven years after that day in September, the attack is too distant for tears, too near for understanding."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Al-Qaida Lives. Kill It"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (9/11): "Bush's pledge to hunt down the 9/11 perpetrators ... went partly unfulfilled because America became sidetracked in Iraq.... Al-Qaida, along with the Taliban in which it incubates, has been rejuvenated. What to do?.... The war against Western civilization is real, but the enemy is not a conveniently homogeneous body. Putting al-Qaida out of commission will not achieve victory against a metastasized Islamist threat..... On this meaningful day, let us recall that the West is engaged in a war not against "terror," but against violent, expansionist Muslim extremism. The prospect of the forces of enlightenment prevailing will be immeasurably enhanced if the heteromorphic essence of the enemy is understood -- and if that enemy is confronted judiciously, and with perseverance."

II. "Seven Years Later"

Columnist and historian Tom Segev wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (9/11): "Seven years ago today, it looked as though the world would never again be what it was before the attack on the World Trade Center.... But within 24 hours of the attack, I was also thinking about the greatness of New York City.... 'September 11th,' as people now say in almost every language, also offered a good opening for a historical discussion on the decline of America. The U.S. has lost its status as the sole superpower, and the recent economic crisis has brought about a situation whereby most Americans do not believe today that their children will live a better life than they have. This is ostensibly the most profound expression of the loss of personal security that everyone attributed to the attack; after all, the need to remove one's shoes during the security check before boarding a plane has not really changed the American dream. Nor is America sinking, of course.... Seven years after that day in September, the attack is too distant for tears, too near for understanding."

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